

INSPECTION REPORT

ST CHARLES RC VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Spennymoor

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114260

Head teacher: Mrs M A Galbraith

Reporting inspector: Miss W L R Hunter
3277

Dates of inspection: 10th – 11th December 2001

Inspection number: 193654

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Durham Road Spennymoor County Durham
Postcode:	DL16 6SL
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Father D Burke
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Charles is a voluntary aided Primary School serving three Catholic parishes in Ferryhill, Chilton and Spennymoor, to the south of Durham City. The school draws pupils from a very wide geographical area. The school is very popular and numbers have been rising steadily over recent years. There are now 233 pupils, with an equal number of boys and girls. However, there are significant imbalances in some year groups, with more boys than girls in reception and Year 6, and the reverse situation in Years 2 and 4. The vast majority of pupils are from white European backgrounds and no pupils receive support for English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low. There is a higher than average level of special educational need in the school and seven pupils have statements of specific need, including physical disabilities and medical conditions. Some of these pupils have been disapplied from sitting the national tests at the end of Year 2.

The school's admission number (35) means that pupils are organised into mixed age classes at various points through the school, and this organisation can change from year to year. The school does not have a nursery and children come to the reception class from a wide range of pre-school experiences. When they start school, their attainment is above average with particular strengths in their language, literacy and personal and social skills.

There have been a number of staff changes since the last inspection. A deputy head teacher was appointed soon after the inspection and a new head teacher has been at the school for just under a year. The school has recently undergone extensive building alterations, which have disrupted its normal work.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a sound quality of education and provides satisfactory value for money. Teaching is extremely variable from class to class, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. As a result, pupils' learning is patchy and is better in some classes than others. Pupils with special educational needs are supported particularly well and make good progress but more able pupils are not given the same opportunities to achieve their potential. The school reaches very high standards in pastoral care and personal development. However, academic standards are not high enough at the end of Key Stage 1. This has a knock-on effect and is now starting to show in the school's performance at the end of Year 6. The head teacher is providing excellent leadership and management. Her drive and initiative is starting to move the school forward again.

What the school does well

- The excellent leadership and management of the head teacher have identified where the school needs to improve and her decisive actions are starting to have a positive effect.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The school has a very strong and supportive ethos in which pupils develop very good attitudes, excellent behaviour and excellent relationships.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and this helps them make particularly good progress in their learning.
- The school has strong and effective links with parents. They hold the school in high regard and make a good contribution to its work.

What could be improved

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are too low when compared to what the children could do when they started in reception, and when the school's results are compared with similar schools.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are not high enough.
- Teachers put too much emphasis on what they are planning to teach rather than what they expect pupils to learn. This affects the quality of teaching in some classes and means that more able pupils are not being challenged enough to reach their potential.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997 and, at this time, received a very positive outcome. Since then the school's progress has been unsatisfactory in a number of important areas. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been too low for a while. This has affected the school's test results for seven year olds in recent years but has also had the effect of lowering the base level as these pupils move into Key Stage 2. Following the last inspection, governors became more involved in the school but lacked a sufficiently critical edge to pick up issues that have affected its development. However, there has been rapid and precise improvement in the last 12 months. The head teacher has analytically identified what needs to improve and key governors are now fully aware of their roles, responsibilities and the challenges facing the school. Consequently, the school has a good capacity to improve.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	A	D	E
Mathematics	A	A	B	C
Science	B	A	B	D

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Children start at the school with above average levels of attainment. At the end of reception, they are working at the levels expected for their age, which is not high enough given their advantaged starting point. Standards are also not high enough at the end of Key Stage 1. For instance, in the tests for seven year olds, pupils' reading, writing and mathematics were all well below average in 2000 and writing and mathematics were just as low last year. This means that pupils have a lot to catch up between the ages of seven and 11, and it is starting to show in the school's performance at the end of Year 6. For example, standards dropped in 2001 to the point where English was well below average and science was below average, in comparison to similar schools.

The school's trend in performance at age 11 is still similar to most other schools, but this is because it is being skewed by its previously high results. Standards are starting to be affected by the influence of low performance at the age of seven, and this is showing in the tests for 11 year olds for the first time in 2001. However, the changes implemented by the head teacher in the last year have already made an impact. For example, the work of the current Years 2 and 6 shows a marked improvement in literacy and standards are expected to rise again next year.

Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are not high enough. Pupils do not get a broad enough range of experiences and the school has not had sufficient equipment to teach the full curriculum.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to take advantage of everything the school offers and enjoy their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils have a well-defined sense of right and wrong and follow the school's moral values. They are extremely polite and courteous.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils are confident and willingly take responsibility. They are proud of their school and of what they do well.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance rates are well above the national average.

Pupils' very good attitudes coupled with their excellent behaviour and relationships make the school a very welcoming and happy place to be. There is a strong sense of 'family' in the school and this is central to its religious nature.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching is extremely variable, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. As a result, pupils' learning is patchy and is better in some classes than others. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs are supported well, especially by the high quality work of the teaching assistants, and they consequently make good progress.

Literacy and numeracy are taught very well in some classes but not so well in others. Teachers tend to focus too much on what they plan to teach, rather than what they expect pupils to learn. As a result, the work they give their classes often meets the needs of most pupils but does not provide sufficient stretch or challenge for more able pupils.

The school has recently benefited from additional training in literacy and this is showing a positive effect in this subject. Teachers are now marking written work more thoroughly and are providing better feedback to pupils on their performance. However, in mathematics and science there are still too many worksheets used in some classes, which are too general and are not matched sufficiently to pupils' different needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school offers a good range of sporting, musical and drama activities, but the ICT curriculum has been incomplete for a while, which has affected standards in this subject.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school provides effective support for these pupils and teaching assistants make a significant contribution to their learning. These pupils make good progress and have a positive impact on the school's performance.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. A strong moral code is fundamental to the school's Catholic ethos and this helps pupils develop very well. A wide range of educational visits and visitors support pupils' development well and there are ample opportunities for pupils to develop social skills and learn to be good citizens.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school effectively supports and monitors pupils' welfare and personal development. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress are secure but the information gleaned from these is not used as well as it could be to plan what pupils will learn.

The curriculum for ICT is not meeting statutory requirements. This means that pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding, but suitable planning and equipment is now in place to rectify this. The very good provision for pupils' moral and social development underpins a strong and supportive ethos that provides a comfortable climate for learning in the school. Parents make a particularly good contribution to the life and work of the school by providing valuable help in classrooms, raising funds for extra equipment and supporting projects, such as making story-sacks.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher provides excellent leadership and is the key driving force behind the school's recent developments. Staff have accepted recent changes and are willing to learn and help move the school forward but some still have a narrow view of the management roles expected of curriculum co-ordinators.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors did not keep a sufficiently watchful eye on the school's development following the last inspection and have not critically questioned the school's performance. In this respect, their contribution has been unsatisfactory. However, they have provided good pastoral support and have recently realised the importance of keeping a balance between celebrating the school's successes and keeping its work on track. Governors are committed to improving the school and are now starting to fulfil their responsibilities more securely.
The school's evaluation of	Satisfactory. The head teacher does this extremely well and has

its performance	pinpointed the precise issues that need to be tackled. Other staff, and governors, have little experience of interpreting the school's performance data and therefore have not previously explored patterns or teased out areas to be investigated.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school development plan is now an effective management tool that clearly identifies how funds will be used to support the school's work.

The head teacher has pinpointed the strengths and weaknesses of the school with absolute precision and is starting to accelerate the rate of change and improvement. Best value principles are applied appropriately to all spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has a good reputation and their children like school. • Their children are taught well and make good progress. • They have good relationships with the school and are welcomed and encouraged to be part of its life and work. • The school offers an interesting range of activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents expressed concerns that the change from one head teacher to another has adversely affected some aspects of the school.

Parents hold the school in high regard and are right that it has strengths in its atmosphere and relationships, range of experiences for pupils and its partnership with parents and the local community. However, the quality of teaching varies from class to class, and inspectors disagree strongly with parents about the school's leadership and management. They should be reassured that the new head teacher is providing the best possible leadership for the school and is managing its development well.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The excellent leadership and management of the head teacher have identified where the school needs to improve and her decisive actions are starting to have a positive effect.

1 Since her appointment a year ago, the head teacher has taken time to carefully evaluate the school's work. She has analysed its performance in national tests and identified patterns and trends that have been there for a while. She has monitored the quality of teaching in all classes and has looked carefully at the work being produced by pupils of all ages. In doing this, she has rightly identified strengths in the school but has also highlighted some fundamental areas for development and improvement. These have been documented effectively in the new current school development plan. Consequently, the school now has a very clear agenda to follow.

2 The school development plan is detailed, thorough and tackles the issues that are at the heart of the school's improvement. It identifies a lot of work that needs to be done and is therefore very ambitious. Nevertheless, it sets a very clear scene for where the school is now, how it is performing, and what needs to change. Key governors are fully aware that the priorities and targets identified in the school development plan form a long-term programme of improvement for the school. They are committed to working in partnership with the head teacher and staff to implement the changes needed.

3 The head teacher has worked hard to establish supportive and positive relationships with staff and governors. This has been successful and shows in the way that all staff pull together as a team. This is a crucial factor in the school's future development. The roles and responsibilities that have been given to staff in the past do not always reflect their strengths and this is an area that the head teacher is now starting to look at closely. Curriculum co-ordinators are starting to become more aware of the responsibility and level of accountability they need to hold, and they are being supported well by training put in place by the head teacher.

4 The head teacher has worked closely with the local education authority and has used this external expertise to confirm and support her views of the school's work. As a result, she has taken positive strategic decisions about the allocation of responsibilities to staff, the organisation of classes and has also moved some teachers into different year groups. For example, the deputy head teacher now has responsibility for teaching Year 2 pupils and for supporting them through the tests at the age of seven. This is starting to show a positive benefit to the school, especially in the standard of literacy and numeracy work now being produced in Year 2.

5 The head teacher has introduced ideas and implemented change at an appropriate rate during her first year in the school, and is now starting to accelerate the developments taking place. She focussed correctly on literacy and numeracy over the past 12 months, but took a different approach to each area to make sure that the changes she instigated did not overload staff and had maximum effect. For instance, developments in literacy have centred around monitoring the quality of teachers' planning, looking at samples of pupils' work to identify where improvements were needed, and using expertise from literacy consultants to train and support staff. This has worked well and is already showing improvements in the range and quality of pupils' writing and the depth and precision of teachers' marking. In numeracy, the emphasis has been on observing the quality of teaching in lessons, analysing the school's performance in tests, and on identifying which areas of the curriculum need an extra boost. Again, this has been successful and has encouraged staff to look at what they teach and how effectively pupils learn.

6 The head teacher is providing excellent leadership. She has taken a long hard look at the school's performance and has challenged staff and governors to ask themselves whether it is good enough. This is much needed and has set the scene for the school's future development.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The school has a very strong and supportive ethos in which pupils develop very good attitudes, excellent behaviour and excellent relationships.

7 The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a central feature of its work. It underpins a strong and supportive ethos that provides a comfortable climate for learning and brings a happy 'family' atmosphere to the school. As a result, pupils have very good attitudes to learning and are keen to show what they can do.

8 The school's links with parents, the community and local parishes contribute well to pupils' spiritual development. For instance, pupils and adults share celebrations on special occasions and the school hosts a weekly Mass. Assemblies support pupils' spiritual awareness by giving them opportunities to worship together and to think about how their actions show their feelings and character. For example, in one assembly, the head teacher made very positive use of discussions about pupils' family preparations for Christmas to get them to make an 'advent promise' for Jesus. They then sat and thought about this as candles burned to create a calm and reflective mood. Pupils' spiritual development is also promoted well through the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. This includes opportunities for 'circle time' activities where pupils are encouraged to share and talk about their thoughts and feelings. A good example of this was in the reception and Year 1 class when pupils sat in pairs and mirrored each other actions to show how they could 'put trust in their friends'.

9 A strong moral code is fundamental to the school's Catholic ethos and this helps pupils develop a clear understanding of right and wrong, and of the implications of their actions on others. Pupils of all ages have been involved in agreeing their individual class rules and the school's code of conduct. This means that the school's rules have genuine meaning for the pupils and they respect and understand why they are there. The school uses 'awards' effectively to reward good attitudes, behaviour and effort from pupils. As a result, pupils strive to do their best and to show examples of fair play, trust and respect. Their behaviour is excellent and they are extremely proud of their school.

10 A wide range of educational visits and visitors support pupils' development well and there are ample opportunities for pupils to develop social skills and learn to be good citizens. For example, they are encouraged to participate in a range of sports and team games. A large number of pupils take advantage of the good selection of extra-curricular and after-school activities offered to them, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 are encouraged to become self-reliant during a residential visit to an outdoor education centre. A 'buddy' system operates between pupils in Year 6 and the children in reception. This is a key strand in the school's provision and is seen to be a major strength by parents. It helps to forge the excellent relationships in the school and gives the youngest children good role models to turn to and look up to. Another important, and successful, feature of the school is the 'pupil forum' that gives pupils a chance to be involved in making decisions and influencing what happens in the school. For instance, when the pupil representatives expressed concern about litter in the playground – this was followed up by prompt action to put lids on all the litter-bins to solve the situation.

11 The school has improved its provision for pupils' cultural development since the last inspection. There is now a clear emphasis on making sure that pupils become aware of different faiths and cultures through their work in many areas of the curriculum. For example, the religious education scheme teaches them about several major world faiths, as well as Christianity. The music curriculum

now includes examples of music from many different countries and cultures, such as India, Russia, Spain, Japan and Latin America. In addition, an African musician's visit to the school gives pupils a first-hand opportunity to see and hear instruments that they would not normally experience. The art and design curriculum has also been reviewed and developed to include interesting opportunities to develop pupils' cultural awareness, including fabric work using African textiles, Indian art, African wire sculpture and tiles using Islamic patterns. The library contains a good number of books that have a multi-cultural theme and this further encourages pupils to learn and think about races, religions and cultures different to their own.

Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and this helps them make particularly good progress in their learning.

12 The head teacher has assumed the role of co-ordinator for special educational needs since her appointment to the school. She has established a sound range of systems and procedures to identify and document the needs of pupils as they arise, although she is fully aware that there is still room for further improvement here.

13 The individual learning programmes for pupils with special educational needs are written by the class teachers. This means that the quality and precision of the targets set for these pupils vary from class to class. Despite this, the pupils receive very well-focussed support from the teaching assistants and support staff who know them so well that they instinctively meet their individual needs. The work of this group of staff is a key strength of the school and makes a fundamental contribution to pupils' learning and the school's standards.

14 Pupils with special educational needs are supported in a range of ways. For instance, they often work in small groups as part of the whole class, but with an adult supporting them at each stage in their work. This works well, especially in the lessons where the entire class is focusing on the same topic. For example, at the start of a mathematics lesson in the mixed reception and Year 1 class, the teacher worked with the Year 1 pupils while the teaching assistant worked with the reception children to look at different ways of sorting objects that were suitable to their different ages. Because each adult had a small number of children to work with, they were able to involve them in a good level of discussion and make sure that they understood precisely what they were doing. As the lesson progressed to the next stage, where pupils worked on a range of activities set out for them, the support assistant worked effectively with a group of lower attaining and special educational needs pupils to reinforce their understanding of sorting. Similarly, in an English lesson in Year 3, two different groups of pupils were supported very well by adults to help them identify the tense they should be using when writing directions. In other lessons, pupils with special educational needs are sometimes withdrawn from the class to work with an adult in one of the 'quiet' areas, where they can be given tightly focused support. Again, this works very well, for example when two pupils with statements of special educational needs worked together with a support assistant to identify the features of two and three-dimensional shapes.

15 The number of pupils with special educational needs is increasing. This is mainly because the school has gained a good reputation among parents for providing effective support for these pupils, and more parents are opting to send their children to the school. Parents are right to value the additional support that their children receive from trained staff. This is making a good contribution to the learning and personal development of these pupils.

The school has strong and effective links with parents. They hold the school in high regard and make a good contribution to its work.

16 This is a popular school with nearly two-thirds of parents choosing to send their children to the school by bus each day because of the distance they live from the school. Parents have positive views of the school and value the relationships they develop with the teachers, staff and governors. This adds to the 'family' feel about the school and supports the positive and welcoming atmosphere.

17 Parents and other family members are welcomed into the school and are encouraged to take an active part in its work. For instance, they provide valuable help in classrooms by working with groups of pupils to give extra support during lessons and the parental group (Friends of St Charles) raises substantial funds for equipment, such as computing equipment. Parents also support specific projects, such as making story-sacks, that contribute well to pupils' learning. Parents are encouraged to share important events in their children's lives with others, for example by bringing baptismal mementoes to a 'moments that matter' gathering. In a similar way, parents and other family members turned out in force to see the reception and infant pupils putting on a Christmas production for their benefit, and many of them had been involved in helping to make the costumes for their children. These activities all help to forge strong and supportive links between parents and the school. Parents feel that they are making a good contribution and that their efforts are valued.

18 Parents are kept well informed about what is happening in the school and the changes that are taking place. A recent survey and questionnaire prepared by the head teacher confirmed that their children like and enjoy school and that parents are generally happy with all aspects of school life. This is further supported by the positive response from parents to the OFSTED questionnaire sent out prior to the inspection. The school has a comprehensive brochure that gives parents plenty of useful information and this is complemented by regular informative newsletters. In addition, teachers have recently started sending out summaries of what they are going to be teaching to each class so that parents know the areas their children will be covering and can choose to help and support them at home. Homework is used effectively and parents provide good support by listening to their children read at home.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are too low when compared to what the children could do when they started in reception, and when the school's results are compared with similar schools.

19 The school runs a system where children come into the reception class on a part-time basis for the first few weeks of the autumn term. This induction takes far too long and means that the children are missing valuable time in school. Almost all the children have had some form of nursery or pre-school experience and are capable of adjusting to full-time education much earlier than they are allowed to by the current system.

20 When children start in the reception class, they have good levels of literacy and numeracy, and their personal and social skills are well developed. After a slow start at the beginning of the year, children make reasonably steady progress through reception, but they could do better. By the time they are ready to move into Year 1, children have met the targets laid down for their age but, given their above average skills when they start school, some should be working beyond this. Consequently, standards are not as high as they should be which means that children go into Year 1 at a lower level than they could. The head teacher has correctly identified that the curriculum taught in reception limits the children to a certain level and needs to be adapted to broaden and extend them in the summer term, in preparation for their transfer into Year 1.

21 Teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall but varies in quality from class to class. This is clear from the head teacher's and local education authority's monitoring of the situation, and is confirmed by the fact that the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 ranged from very good to unsatisfactory in the sample of lessons seen during the inspection. This variation in teaching affects pupils' progress, especially on the occasions when teaching is not matched sufficiently well to the different ages and needs of all pupils in the class. This has a knock-on effect and compounds the lag in children's achievements from the end of reception. As a result, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have not been high enough for the past few years.

22 In the national tests for seven year olds in 2000, pupils' reading, writing and mathematics results were all well below average when compared to similar schools. The writing and mathematics results were just as low last year. Although there was some improvement in reading in 2001, there has been a clear downward trend in mathematics for several years that has not been picked up or tackled sufficiently well. Because pupils are not achieving as well as they should be by the end of Key Stage 1, it means that they have a lot to catch up between the ages of seven and 11. This is starting to show in the school's performance at the end of Year 6. For example, in the national tests for 11 year olds in 2001, standards dropped to the point where the school's performance in English was well below average and science was below average, in comparison to similar schools.

23 The head teacher is acutely aware of the fact that standards are not as high as they could be at the end of reception or by the end of Key Stage 1, and that this can have a cumulative effect on the school's performance as these pupils grow older. She has analysed the situation carefully and has taken decisive and positive action to rectify the problem. For example, she has moved some teachers into different classes, staff have had training in literacy to raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve, and the curriculum in the reception class is to be reviewed to make sure that it meets children's needs and challenges them enough. Although most of this has only happened recently, it is already beginning to show benefits. For instance, the work of the pupils in the current Year 2 class suggests that the standards in literacy and numeracy should improve at the end of Key Stage 1 this year.

Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are not high enough.

24 Information and communication technology (ICT) has suffered because the school has not had sufficient reliable equipment to be able to teach it effectively. Consequently, the full requirements of the curriculum have not been taught and it is not meeting statutory requirements. This means that pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding and, as a result, standards are not as high as they should be. For example, in Year 6, pupils have little understanding of how to use spreadsheets and databases, or of how to combine information (such as text, sounds, animation and graphics) using multi-media packages. They have not had experience of electronic mail or of using computers to sense, monitor and control physical events.

25 The school has tried to make the best use of the limited ICT facilities it had available but the lack of resources has inhibited developments in this subject. Recent investment has meant that all classes now have access to a new up-to-date computer system with an appropriate range of software to support pupils' learning. Building work has also just been completed to give the school space to set up a computer suite, but this is so recent that it is not yet fully equipped or functional. Similarly, the school now has a comprehensive scheme of work that covers all aspects of ICT, but this is not yet being taught fully. Staff have undertaken training and are keen to continue to develop their own skills and expertise and to make use of ICT through their teaching. These are all positive developments but they have not yet had time to make a meaningful impact on the range of experiences being offered to pupils or the standards in the school.

26 The school has recognised that ICT is in a transitional stage and that it is a key area for development. The co-ordinator has developed a clear action plan for the subject that complements the priorities identified in the school development plan. Consequently, the school is well placed to make good improvements in ICT although it will take time to raise pupils' skills from the low levels at present.

Teachers put too much emphasis on what they are planning to teach rather than what they expect pupils to learn. This affects the quality of teaching in some classes and means that more able pupils are not being challenged enough to reach their potential.

27 The school supports pupils with special educational needs very well but it does not always meet the needs of the more able pupils to the same extent. These pupils are not stretched and challenged effectively enough to work and achieve at the levels they could. This is one of the reasons why the school's test performance is lower than it should be, when compared to similar schools, at ages seven and 11.

28 When teachers plan their lessons they tend to focus too much on what, and how, they intend to teach. They plan a lot of detail about the activities, the resources and the content of their lessons but make little reference to the pupils. In too many instances, they do not identify the purpose of the lesson clearly enough or tease out what they expect the pupils to learn as a result of their teaching. In some classes, this doesn't have too much effect on pupils' learning because the teachers instinctively share the reasons for their lessons with the class and explain what they expect pupils to get out of each activity. In these instances, teaching is very good anyway and the teachers pitch their work correctly to meet the range of different needs of their pupils. However, in other classes, the insufficient emphasis on pupils' learning in planning translates into bland, and sometimes unsatisfactory, teaching that does not meet the needs of the more able pupils. For instance, there are occasions where all pupils are expected to start work at the same stage and the more able pupils are 'challenged' by being expected to get through more work than the rest of the class. In reality, these pupils could often skip some of the initial work and start on a higher level activity that stimulates and interests them more effectively. Similarly, more able pupils are sometimes given worksheets that limit their creativity and restrict opportunities for them to extend their learning at a faster rate.

29 The head teacher has rightly identified that some teachers confuse the difference between the assessment of pupils' work, the recording of pupils' achievements and their own evaluation of how effective their teaching is. This ties in with the focus on 'teaching' rather than 'learning' in teachers' planning. For example, teachers put a lot of effort into evaluating and recording whether their lessons went according to plan, but they do not put the same emphasis on judging or documenting whether pupils learnt what was intended. Consequently, teachers do not make as much use of the results of assessments to help plan work that builds on what pupils already know as they could. Again, this affects the more able pupils most and slows the rate of their progress and learning. This issue has been clearly identified as a priority to be tackled in the school development plan in order to raise standards.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

30 The school should now:

- (a) Improve the rate of progress through reception, raise standards by the end of Key Stage 1 and improve the school's test performance, when compared to similar schools.
(Paragraphs 19 – 23)
- (b) Raise standards in information and communication technology (ICT) by:
- providing sufficient resources to equip the computer suite;
 - improving teachers' knowledge and expertise in information and communication technology;
 - making sure that the curriculum meets statutory requirements;
 - teaching pupils how to bring information that is produced in different software packages together electronically;
 - making sure that pupils are given sufficient opportunities to work with databases and to interrogate, search and retrieve information;
 - making sure that pupils are given sufficient opportunities to use spreadsheets to model and investigate different situations;
 - teaching pupils how to use computers to sense, monitor and control physical events;
 - teaching pupils how to use electronic mail;
 - using ICT more often to support pupils' work in other subjects.
- (Paragraphs 24 – 26)
- (c) Improve the rate of pupils' learning and raise standards across the school by:
- making sure that teachers' planning puts a clear emphasis on what pupils are expected to learn;
 - making sure that more able pupils are given sufficiently challenging tasks and activities;
 - making sure that teachers understand the difference between assessment and recording;
 - identifying opportunities to assess and evaluate whether pupils have learnt what was intended in each lesson or sequence of lessons;
 - making use of the results of these assessments to help teachers to plan work that builds on what pupils already know.
- (Paragraphs 27 – 29)

Note:

All the above issues had already been identified by the head teacher and are incorporated in the current school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	13
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	4	4	2	0	0
Percentage	-	23%	31%	31%	15%	-	-

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than seven percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	233
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	62

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	13	13	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	19	19	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73% (76%)	73% (82%)	73% (88%)
	National	84% (83%)	86% (84%)	91% (90%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	19	19	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73% (76%)	73% (88%)	73% (88%)
	National	85% (84%)	89% (88%)	89% (88%)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	17	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	10	14
	Girls	13	14	17
	Total	24	24	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77% (93%)	77% (83%)	100% (97%)
	National	75% (75%)	71% (72%)	87% (85%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	9	12
	Girls	13	13	14
	Total	23	22	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74% (72%)	71% (76%)	84% (79%)
	National	72% (70%)	74% (72%)	82% (79%)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	194
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	155

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 2001
	£
Total income	420,803
Total expenditure	407,000
Expenditure per pupil	1,732
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,599
Balance carried forward to next year	18,402

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	233
Number of questionnaires returned	88

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	25	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	64	31	2	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	39	1	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	48	5	0	2
The teaching is good.	67	30	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	43	3	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	24	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	25	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	45	50	2	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	52	38	6	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	32	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	39	1	0	5